

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**

## EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

RAKEEM LEVON RHODES,

Petitioner,

*versus*

DIRECTOR, TDCJ-ID,

Respondent.



CIVIL ACTION NO. 9:21-CV-49

**MEMORANDUM ORDER OVERRULING OBJECTIONS AND ADOPTING  
THE MAGISTRATE JUDGE’S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Rakeem Levon Rhodes, an inmate confined within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Correctional Institutions Division, proceeding *pro se*, filed this petition for writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254. Petitioner challenges a conviction for capital murder.

The court previously referred this matter to the Honorable Christine L. Stetson, United States Magistrate Judge, at Beaumont, Texas, for consideration pursuant to applicable laws and orders of the court. The magistrate judge has submitted a Report and Recommendation of United States Magistrate Judge recommending the petition be denied.

The court has received the Report and Recommendation of United States Magistrate Judge, along with the record, pleadings, and all available evidence. The respondent filed objections to the Report and Recommendation.

The court has conducted a *de novo* review of the respondent's objections in relation to the pleadings and the applicable law. After careful consideration, the court is of the opinion the objections are without merit. The respondent agrees with the magistrate judge's conclusion that the petition should be denied on the merits. However, the respondent complains that the magistrate judge failed to address the contention that petitioner's first ground for review is barred by the applicable statute of limitations. However, in light of her recommendation that the petition be denied on the merits, there was no need for the magistrate judge to consider the additional ground for dismissal asserted by the respondent.

**ORDER**

Accordingly, the objections filed by the respondent (#25) are **OVERRULED**. The findings of fact and conclusions of law of the magistrate judge are correct and the report of the magistrate judge (#24) is **ADOPTED**. A final judgment will be entered denying the petition.

Furthermore, petitioner is not entitled to the issuance of a certificate of appealability. An appeal from a final judgment denying habeas relief may not proceed unless a certificate of appealability is issued. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 2253. The standard for a certificate of appealability requires the petitioner to make a substantial showing of the denial of a federal constitutional right. *See Slack v. McDaniel*, 529 U.S. 473, 483-84 (2000); *Elizalde v. Dretke*, 362 F.3d 323, 328 (5th Cir. 2004). To make a substantial showing, the petitioner need not establish that he would prevail on the merits. Rather, he must demonstrate that the issues raised in the petition are subject to debate among jurists of reason, that a court could resolve the issues in a different manner, or that the questions presented are worthy of encouragement to proceed further. *See Slack*, 529 U.S. at 483-84. Any doubt regarding whether to grant a certificate of appealability should be resolved in favor of the petitioner, and the severity of the penalty may be considered in making this determination. *See Miller v. Johnson*, 200 F.3d 274, 280-81 (5th Cir. 2000).

In this case, the petitioner has not shown that the issue of whether his petition is meritorious is subject to debate among jurists of reason. The factual and legal questions raised by petitioner have been consistently resolved adversely to his position and the questions presented are not worthy of encouragement to proceed further. Petitioner has failed to make a sufficient showing to merit the issuance of a certificate of appealability. Thus, a certificate of appealability will not be issued.

SIGNED at Beaumont, Texas, this 31st day of May, 2023.



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MARCIA A. CRONE

2 UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE